

Application Portfolio

for

Regents' Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Award

Dr. Robert Bledsoe

Dept. of English & World Languages

Augusta University

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AUGUSTA
UNIVERSITY

November 2, 2022

Dear Selection Committee,

I am thrilled to nominate Dr. Robert Bledsoe for the Regents' Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) award. Dr. Bledsoe continues to demonstrate his passion for SoTL for students and instructors. His dedication to discovery and leadership in active-learning pedagogy are making a significant impact on the lives of our students. Through Dr. Bledsoe's research on *Reacting to the Past* (RTTP), this learning experience is now used in classes across our campus, enriching student learning.

The meaningful learning outcomes of Dr. Bledsoe's integration of RTTP into his courses provided the incentive for him to research the impact of this learning activity further. The results of his work are providing instructors with innovative insights into active-learning activities. His approach to SoTL considers the effect on students and instructors.

Dr. Bledsoe's contributions to the study of using *Reacting* activities in the classroom are helping to shape views on new teaching practices. In his research, he demonstrates collegiality and leadership by collaborating with other faculty and students. Dr. Bledsoe's findings on the impact instructor mindset have on student learning will promote new ideas and drive future research questions. His scholarship is recognized by many. Dr. Bledsoe is involved in multiple SoTL journals as a reviewer of manuscripts. His growing list of publications includes his recent research on RTTP and the effect that role plays on the personal attributes of students. Dr. Bledsoe shares his passion for SoTL with faculty on our campus and colleagues at conferences and workshops.

Dr. Bledsoe's work makes a difference in the classroom, creating impactful learning experiences for our students. His research, mentorship, and service make Augusta University a campus like no other.

Sincerely,

Neil J. MacKinnon, PhD
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

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Teaching Philosophy Narrative and Scholarship

Lee Shulman defines Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) as scholarly work motivated by the “pedagogical imperative... to inquire into the consequences of one’s work with students... an obligation that devolves on individual faculty members, on programs, on institutions, and even on disciplinary communities.” Shulman’s statement suggests that SoTL is not limited to the study of the classroom but must also explore the factors that influence learning, including institutional context. As a teacher-scholar, my teaching, leadership, service and research have been driven by the desire to support student learning by improving teaching and the organizations that support it. This motivates my commitment to curricular revision, as seen in my work with the World Languages and Humanities programs, in assessing student learning within the department and as a member of General Education Assessment committee, and my work as the Associate Director of the Office of Faculty Development and Teaching Excellence (2016-18). This commitment has yielded 9 SoTL publications, 2 external grants and numerous conference and workshop presentations.

I am deeply committed to the concept of a liberal arts education, i.e., a curriculum that fosters that students’ awareness of and curiosity about their rich cultural heritage as Americans and citizens of the world, while helping them develop the skills necessary to act effectively as citizens, including the ability to think critically, to communicate effectively, and to work effectively with others. To work towards this goal, I strive to create courses that are engaging and meaningful, and that open students to fundamentally new perspectives on the world and themselves.

To create an environment conducive to learning, one must act intentionally. I approach teaching as a craft that combines creativity with inquiry. As such, it should be cultivated and developed through engagement with the scholarly literature in the field and the thoughtful implementation and evaluation of evidence-based teaching practices. This approach has led me to foreground active learning strategies and to develop a SoTL program that examines the efficacy of active learning and inquiries into non-academic factors that impact learning.

The path to this research program started when I included a Reacting to the Past module in my Humanities courses. Reacting is a relatively new pedagogy developed by the historian Mark Carnes at Barnard and Columbia that is now used in hundreds of colleges in the US. Students engage in extended, often multi-week role-playing scenarios taken from history. By requiring students to tackle significant historical texts, debate their merits and work in teams, this pedagogy offers an intensive liberal arts experience and provides students broadly useful skills. Since the game I had adapted for my class took 4-5 weeks of the semester, I felt a responsibility to document its effectiveness. This resulted in “The Crowded Streets of Paris: Using Reacting to the Past Games in Less than Ideal Situations,” which appeared in the first book devoted to SoTL research on Reacting. The study demonstrated that the modified pedagogy was effective in large classes and led me to ask additional questions about the efficacy of this intensive active learning practice. Working with Dr. Deborah Richardson and various students, those questions led to a complex study comparing student experience in Reacting and non-Reacting classes and examining whether students changed as a function of their experience in the Reacting classroom. “Impact of Reacting to the Past and Effect of Role on Student Attributes and Academic Outcomes,” which recently appeared in the *International Journal of Teaching and*

Learning in Higher Education, demonstrated that students in courses using Reacting were more engaged and increased more in academic self-efficacy and other academic outcomes than students in similar courses that didn't use the pedagogy. This was also the first study to show that the effect on students varied depending on the type of role they were assigned, suggesting important implications for the design and implementation of the Reacting pedagogy.

This study exemplifies the relationship of my SoTL work to my teaching. On the one hand, the study uses rigorous research design and statistical analysis to confirm the efficacy of this active learning pedagogy. On the other hand, it shows an awareness that individual students respond to active learning differently and that we need to understand the factors and dynamics involved. Therefore, I continue to develop studies examining how individual differences such as personality and personal background contribute to student outcomes in Reacting and in language study.

Much attention has legitimately focused on promoting a growth mindset in students, but I am interested in understanding the impact of instructor mindset on student learning. Many faculty members are reluctant to adopt new teaching practices. Some of this resistance comes from institutional structures and reward systems; but does an instructor's attitude toward intelligence and teaching ability also impact their willingness to adopt evidence-based teaching practices and to seek feedback on teaching? "Mindset, Motivation, and Teaching Practice: Psychology Applied to Understanding Teaching and Learning in STEM Disciplines" (*CBE-Life Sciences Education*, 19:ar46, 1-7) indicated that a STEM faculty member's teaching goal orientation was more likely than their mindset to predict the likelihood that they adopted evidence-based teaching practices. "Mindset and Motivational Predictors of Effective Teaching Practice: Research Informs the Future of Professional Development" (*ETH Learning and Teaching Journal* 2) looks at the same issue in faculty teaching undergraduate students in other disciplines, and one study currently under review and one to be submitted by the end of the semester explore additional aspects. By furthering our understanding of the impact of faculty motivation to teaching, these studies may help educational developers design more effective programming to reach more faculty members.

Three other articles take up the issue of institutional structures and reward systems in promoting student success, by examining differing issues related to teaching awards. The final study in this trio was a study of award nominations. "Student Perceptions of Great Teaching: A Qualitative Analysis" (*Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 21(3), 21-32) revealed that traditional undergraduate students conceptualize their instructors differently and value different aspects of their interactions with instructors than students in the Health Sciences, suggesting that effective teaching varies by discipline, student status and teaching context.

These strands of SoTL research come together in my teaching philosophy. At the core of education is student learning facilitated by the encounter between student, material and instructor. This encounter is embedded in a myriad of individual, disciplinary and institutional contexts that influence the student's success. We need to be attentive and take responsibility not only for our personal interactions with students, but also for the disciplinary and institutional context in which this encounter takes place.

Abstracts of SoTL Work

Publications

- Bledsoe, R. & Richardson, D. (2022). "Impact of Reacting to the Past and Effect of Role on Student Attributes and Academic Outcomes." *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 33(3), 361-373. <https://isetl.org/ijtlhe/pdf/IJTLHE4070.pdf>

Reacting to the Past (Reacting) is an active-learning pedagogy utilizing elaborate historical role-playing games. This study examined the effect of Reacting on student academic self-efficacy, perspective taking, engagement, and perceived learning. It further considered whether these outcomes were impacted by the type of role a student assumed. Students from Reacting classes completed surveys prior to beginning and after completing the game. Students in similar non-Reacting classes completed surveys at approximately the same time. Students involved in Reacting reported more engagement, perceived learning and self-efficacy than students enrolled in comparable courses, demonstrating the value of Reacting as an active-learning pedagogy. However, Reacting participants in roles that aligned them to a faction with a committed perspective reported more improvement in self-efficacy than participants in non-aligned roles. The article concludes with a consideration of pedagogical interventions to respond to the study's findings.

- Richardson, D., Bledsoe R., & *Manning, K. (2022). "Pushing active learning to the extreme: A scholarly personal narrative." *College Teaching*. Published online 9/6/2022. <https://doi.org/10.1080/87567555.2022.2110032>

The essay addresses the rewards and challenges of an immersive experiential active learning pedagogy that Dr. Richardson and I encountered while using Reacting in a course on the history and systems of psychology. Although research indicates that active learning benefits student learning and engagement, implementing active learning often requires extensive effort from instructors. Thus, this essay considers whether the benefits to students and instructors outweigh the effort. We conclude that the direct and indirect benefits of observing student learning and development in addition to the rewards of scholarly collaboration outweigh the costs of continual course redesign and student discomfort. The essay also offers reflective prompts for instructors to consider when (re)designing courses for active learning practice.

- Bledsoe, R., Richardson, D. & *Kalle, A. (2021). "Student Perceptions of Great Teaching: A Qualitative Analysis." *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 21(3), 21-32. doi:10.14434/josotl.v21i3.30661

What behaviors do students consider as representative of exemplary teaching? Do those representations vary by context? This study evaluated 176 student nominations for a teaching award that asked nominators to articulate specific acts by individual instructors that exemplify "great teaching." Through an iterative process, the content analysis identified 10 themes, which generally represent socioemotional connection, behaviors relevant to student learning, and instructor characteristics. We also identified two themes—the instructor as a model and as

someone whose efforts exceed expectations—that do not appear frequently in existing literature. Quantitative analysis revealed that frequency of themes differed for instructors from traditional liberal arts and sciences disciplines and those from professional programs in the health sciences, thereby pointing to the need to be attentive to the educational context and student expectations and characteristics when defining and evaluating exemplary teaching.

- Richardson, D., Bledsoe, R., & Cortez, Z. (2020). “Mindset, Motivation, and Teaching Practice: Psychology Applied to Understanding Teaching and Learning in STEM Disciplines.” *CBE-Life Sciences Education*, 19:ar46, 1-7.

Psychological theories of motivation and performance are relevant to teaching and learning in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. This study applies Dweck’s mindset theory of motivation to an examination of the relationship among instructor mindset, instructor motivational attitudes, and the use of effective teaching practices. Faculty members who teach undergraduate courses in STEM disciplines completed a survey designed to assess fixed versus growth mindset, mastery orientation (measures of motivation and efficacy), and teaching practices. Results supported a model consistent with Dweck’s theory of motivation, whereby mastery orientation mediates the relationship between instructor mindset and teaching behaviors. It appears that this psychological theory of motivation may be helpful in understanding instructor behavior in STEM disciplines. More research using a variety of measures and teaching contexts is necessary before full applicability can be realized.

- Bledsoe, R., & Richardson, D. (2020). “Maximizing Learning Using Cognitive Load Theory.” *ETH Learning and Teaching Journal*, 2(2), 148-152.

This article described how limitations of the human information processing system impact learning, and proposes that cognitive load theory (CLT) deserves more attention in educational development as a tool to respond to challenges posed by these limitations. Furthermore, we suggest that CLT can be used to categorize and explain the effectiveness of many evidence-based teaching practices currently in use.

- Richardson, D., & Bledsoe, R. (2020). “Mindset and Motivational Predictors of Effective Teaching Practice: Research Informs the Future of Professional Development.” *ETH Learning and Teaching Journal*, 2(2), 351-353.

Attempts to inform and engage faculty members about effective teaching may benefit from a consideration of how instructor attitudes impact teaching practices. This study employed Dweck’s concept of growth mindset to examine the relationship of mindset and mastery motivation to evidence-based teaching practices. Faculty members at a research comprehensive university in the United States completed a survey that included measures of mindset, motivation, and teaching practice. Regression analysis revealed that good teaching practice was predicted by growth mindset, mastery goals for students, and instructors’ confidence in their teaching ability. Addressing implicit theories of intelligence and beliefs

about mastery might increase the impact and effectiveness of professional development offerings that aim to improve teaching ability.

- Bledsoe, R., Richardson, D. & Kalle, A. (2019). "The Impact of Getting Caught in the Act: Assessing the Institutional Impact of a Teaching Award." *Journal on Centers of Teaching and Learning*, 11, 62-77.

This study examined the institutional awareness and impact of a low-stakes teaching award and asked if the perception of the award would vary as a function of teaching context. Faculty members from departments that did or did not include recipients of the award completed a survey that inquired about their awareness of the award, their perception of how knowing about and receiving the award should affect teaching motivation and performance evaluations for faculty in general and for recipients, and their perception of how much the award should impact interest in attending faculty development events. Survey responses revealed broad awareness of the award and agreement that the award should have positive impact on outcomes for recipients, although few agreed that the award should impact interest in faculty development. Faculty members from the health sciences were somewhat more positive about the award. These findings are consistent with previous research that reported that teaching awards, even low-stake ones, can communicate the value of teaching and are affirming for recipients.

- Bledsoe, R., Maynard, L. & Richardson, D. (2018). "The Crowded Streets of Paris: Using Reacting to the Past Games in Less Than Ideal Situations." *Playing to Learn with Reacting to the Past Research on High Impact, Active Learning Practices*. Ed. Watson, C. E. and Hagood, C. H. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 41-73.

Eager to implement a Reacting to the Past game in a World Humanities course but stymied by the misalignment of the game's maximum role-player limit with their own high course enrollments, I created and piloted two new iterations of the Modernism vs. Traditionalism: Art in Paris, 1888-1889 game. The study of the effects on student learning, engagement, and perception of learning reveals that deploying these two new modifications of the game did not diminish the game's positive educational outcomes for students when compared to a more customary implementation of the game.

- Bledsoe, R. S., & Richardson, D. S. (2016). "An innovative award catches faculty in the act of great teaching." *Journal on Centers for Teaching and Learning*, 8, 51-69.

This article examines a novel approach to honoring faculty through a low-stakes, low-cost teaching award. It describes the development and implementation of the award at Augusta University, considers the advantages of the award as a means to promote teaching excellence, and reports on data assessing the award's impact on recipients and nominees. We conclude that award programs—including ones that do not qualify as exemplary under Svinicki and Menges' guidelines—can be a vital part of a deliberate program that fosters and values excellent teaching.

Submitted

- *Manning, K., Richardson, D. & Bledsoe R. (under revision) "Faculty Mindset and Feedback Seeking."

This study tests a model that predicted that instructor goal orientation would mediate the relationship between teaching mindset and seeking feedback about teaching in a higher education context. Those who are mastery goal-oriented and those who have relatively limited teaching experience are more likely to recognize a need to learn and master a skill and thus are more likely to seek feedback. Participants indicated that they were most likely to seek feedback from students and colleagues within their own discipline rather than from academic development professionals. Professional development programs (and reward systems in universities) may do well to focus on encouraging mastery goal orientation in order to increase instructor performance and on establishing disciplinary expertise and connections within disciplines to increase the impact of teaching and learning initiatives.

In Preparation

- Bledsoe, R. & Richardson, D., "Games and Personality: Interactions between Personal Characteristics and the Reacting Experience." Complete manuscript draft.

Research has established that a variety of factors in student identity can impact student learning in active learning classrooms. This manuscript extends that by exploring the role of personality. It brings together two studies on the effect of personality on self-efficacy and perceived learning and engagement on the Reacting experience using the Hexaco and the Big Five personality inventories. The results indicate that participants who are more extroverted and those who are more conscientious felt they benefitted more from the Reacting experience, while those who are less open to new experiences felt they benefitted less. Instructors will need to develop strategies to engage those students who are less open to new experience.

- Richardson, D. & Bledsoe, R. "Mindset and Motivational Predictors of Effective Teaching Practice in Undergraduate Faculty." In preparation.

This manuscript explores whether the model developed in research on the relationship among instructor mindset, instructor motivational attitudes, and the use of effective teaching practices of undergraduates in the STEM Disciplines can be extended to other academic disciplines.

- *Jarrad, C., Richardson, D., & Bledsoe, R. "Student Perceptions of Faculty Mindset." Manuscript draft.

This study explores student responses to mock course syllabuses that suggest that the instructor has either a fixed or a growth mindset. Participants felt more likely to be treated

fairly and to perform well in the class with an instructor with a growth mindset that in the class with an instructor with a fixed mindset. Although male and female participants responded similarly to the growth mindset syllabus, female participants felt they were less likely to be treated fairly and to perform well in the class with an instructor with a fixed mindset than male participants did.

- Bledsoe, R. & Richardson, D. "Language Learning and Mindset." Approved by IRB review 8/30/2022

This study examines if and how a student's mindset (i.e., whether they consider ability or intelligence to be malleable or fixed) changes over the course of an introductory language class. Do students become more convinced that language is a "natural" ability that some people have and some do not, or do they develop more of a notion that language ability can be developed with effort?

It also explores the concept of subdomains within language learning mindset, i.e. Are there unique, identifiable subdomains of language learning mindset?

As you will notice from my curriculum vitae and these abstracts, my SoTL work is conducted collaboratively. I usually take primary responsibility for developing the research questions. We then develop the study protocol together. I guide projects through the internal review process. When preparing a manuscript, I am generally responsible for the introduction, literature review and discussion, while Dr. Richardson (Prof. of Psychological Sciences, AU) is responsible for the methodology and data analysis. Students take on various roles throughout the process depending on their abilities. The effort to foster a new generation of researchers has been successful. Since 2019 most of the publications and conference presentations have been co-authored with students. Three of these students are currently in doctoral programs and one is pursuing a master's degree.

* before an author's name indicates that the individual was a student researcher.

I currently review manuscripts for three SoTL journals:

- *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*
- *Scholarship and Practice of Undergraduate Research*
- *Teaching and Learning Inquiry*

ROBERT S. BLEDSOE

**Professor of German
Augusta University**

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English & World Languages
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EDUCATION

Ph.D. University of California at Berkeley, German, May 1994
Eberhard-Karls-Universität - Tübingen, (DAAD Scholar) 1988-9
M.A. University of California at Berkeley, German, May 1986
A.B. University of California at Berkeley, German and History, December 1983

PROFESSIONAL

Academic Appointments

Professor of German, Augusta University, August 2021 to present
Associate Professor of German, Augusta University, August 2004 to 2021
Assistant Professor of German, Augusta State University, August 2000 to July 2004
Assistant Professor of German Studies, Rice University, August 1994 to July 2000.

Administrative Responsibilities and Appointments

Associate Director, Office of Faculty Development and Teaching Excellence, Augusta University, 2017—2018, (Interim) 2016—2017
Assistant Director for Faculty Recognition and Instructional Innovation, Office of Faculty Development and Teaching Excellence, Augusta University, 2015—2016
Assistant Chair, Department of English & Foreign Languages, Augusta University, 2013—2015
Director, Humanities Program, Augusta University, 2013—2015
Coordinator of Faculty Development, Humanities Program, 2011—2013

Grants

Project Director, "Combining Open Educational Resources and High-Impact Practices to Transform Area C," Complete College Georgia Innovation Grant, University System of Georgia (4/14-6/15) (\$24,500)
Project Director, National Endowment for the Humanities Focus Grant: "Languages in the Humanities at Rice University" with project coordinators Bernard Aresu (French Studies) and Michael Barlow (Linguistics) (7/95-2/97) (\$23,000).
Fellow, National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute: "Teaching German Across the Curriculum" (July-August 1995).
Project Director, Brown Teaching Grant: "German 201/202: Proficiency Through Content" (4/98-6/99) (\$5000).
Project Director, Brown Teaching Grant: "Integrating Technology into Elementary German Language Instruction" (4/97-5/98) (\$4000).
Fellow, NEH-Sarofim Grant: "Teaching in the Humanities" (1997-98).

AWARDS AND HONORS

Recipient, 2016 USG Textbook Transformation Award, 2016.
Governor's Teaching Fellow, Institute of Higher Education, University of Georgia, AY 13-14.
Faculty Associate of the Year, Jones College, Rice University, 1997-98
Distinguished Faculty Associate, Rice University, 1995-2000

PUBLICATIONS related to Teaching and Learning

Articles and Chapters

- Bledsoe, R. & Richardson, D. 2022. "Games, Role and Gender: Interactions between Personal Characteristics and the RTTP Experience." *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 33(3), 361-373.
- Richardson, D. S., Bledsoe, R. S., & Manning, K. 2022. "Pushing active learning to the extreme: A scholarly personal narrative." *College Teaching*. Published online 9/6/2022.
- Bledsoe, R., Richardson, D. & Kalle, A. 2021. "Student Perceptions of Great Teaching: A Qualitative Analysis." *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 21(3), 21-32.
- Richardson, D., Bledsoe, R., & Cortez, Z. 2020. "Mindset, Motivation, and Teaching Practice: Psychology Applied to Understanding Teaching and Learning in STEM Disciplines." *CBE-Life Sciences Education*, 19:ar46, 1-7.
- Bledsoe, R., Richardson, D. & Kalle, A. 2019. "The Impact of Getting Caught in the Act: Assessing the Institutional Impact of a Teaching Award." *Journal on Centers of Teaching and Learning*, 11, 62-77.
- Bledsoe, R., Maynard, L. & Richardson, D. 2018. "The Crowded Streets of Paris: Using Reacting to the Past Games in Less Than Ideal Situations." *Playing to Learn with Reacting to the Past Research on High Impact, Active Learning Practices*. Ed. Watson, C. Edward and Thomas Chase Hagood. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 41-73.
- Bledsoe, R. & Richardson, D. 2016. "An Innovative Teaching Award Catches Faculty in the Act of Great Teaching." *Journal on Centers of Teaching and Learning* 8, 51-69.
- Bledsoe, R., Miller, W. & Polster, A. 1991. "Rethinking Germanistik: Introduction." *Rethinking Germanistik: Canon and Culture*. Berkeley Insights in Linguistics and Semiotics 6. New York: Peter Lang, xi-xx.

Books—edited

- Bledsoe, R., Estabrook, B., Federle, C., Henschel, K., Polster, A. & Miller, W. (Eds.). 1991. *Rethinking Germanistik: Canon and Culture*. Berkeley Insights in Linguistics and Semiotics 6. New York: Peter Lang.

Proceedings

- Bledsoe, R., & Richardson, D. 2020. "Maximizing Learning Using Cognitive Load Theory." *ETH Learning and Teaching Journal* 2, 2, 148-152.
- Richardson, D., & Bledsoe, R. 2020. "Mindset and Motivational Predictors of Effective Teaching Practice: Research Informs the Future of Professional Development." *ETH Learning and Teaching Journal* 2, 2, 351-353.

Under Review

- Manning, K., Richardson, D. & Bledsoe R. "Faculty Mindset and Feedback Seeking." *Teaching and Learning Inquiry*.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS related to SoTL and Educational Development since 2019

- Bledsoe, R. & Richardson, D. "Personality and Student Experience with Active Learning." International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Annual Conference (ISSOTL22). Nov. 2-5, 2022.
- Richardson, D. & Bledsoe, R. "Faculty Growth Mindset Serves Students Underrepresented in STEM." ISSOTL22. Nov. 2-5, 2022.
- Bledsoe, R. & Richardson, D. "Mindset, Motivation, and Evidence-Based Teaching Practices." Southeastern Psychological Association Annual Conference (SEPA). Mar. 23-26, 2022.
- *Manning, K., Richardson, D. & Bledsoe, R. "Mindset, Motivation, and Faculty Feedback Seeking." SEPA. Mar. 23-26, 2022.
- *Jarrard, C., Richardson, D. & Bledsoe, R. "Student Perceptions of Faculty Mindset." SEPA. Mar. 23-26, 2022.
- Bledsoe, R. & Richardson, D. "It's Not Only in the Student's Mind: Instructor Mindset and Motivation." SoTL Commons. Feb. 23-25, 2022.
- Bledsoe, R. & Richardson, D. "The Impact of Personality on Student Experience in Active Learning." SEPA. Online Mar. 17-20, 2020.
- *Manning, K., Richardson, D. & Bledsoe, R. "Reacting to the Past: Active Learning Pedagogy in Psychology Courses." SEPA. Online. Mar. 17-20, 2020.
- *Hill, S., Bledsoe, R. & Richardson, D. "'Know Thyself': Does RTTP Character Investment Affect Student Worldview?" SEPA. Online. Mar. 17-20, 2020.
- Bledsoe, R., *Manning, K., & Richardson, D. "Reacting to the Past: Effects on Student Learning and Engagement." Poster. ITLC Lily Conference: Nov. 30-Dec. 4, 2020.
- Bledsoe, R. & Richardson, D. "Maximizing Learning Using Cognitive Load Theory." Workshop. International Consortium of Educational Development 2020. June 15-18, 2020. (canceled)
- Richardson, D. & Bledsoe, R. "Mindset and Motivational Predictors of Effective Teaching Practice: Research Informs the Future of Professional Development." Research presentation. ICED 2020. June 15-18, 2020. (Conference canceled)
- Bledsoe, R., Richardson, D., & *Manning, K. "Reacting to the Past: A Pedagogy's Effects on Student Learning and Engagement." Poster. USG Teaching and Learning Conference. April 7-9, 2020. (Conference canceled).
- Richardson, D., Bledsoe, R., & *Restrepo, L. "It's not just in the Student's Mind: Instructor Mindset and Motivation." (Research Presentation). USGT&L April 7-9, 2020. (canceled).
- Bledsoe, R. & Richardson, D. "What Do Students Say About Good Teaching?" Research Presentation. POD Network Conference 2019. Nov. 14-17, 2019.
- Bledsoe, R., *Cortez, Z. & Richardson, D. "It's not all in the Mind: Instructor Growth Mindset and Teaching Practices." Research Presentation. ISSOTL 19. International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Annual Conference. Oct. 9-12, 2019.
- Richardson, D. & Bledsoe, R. "Measuring the Effects of Reacting to the Past (RTTP) on Learning and Academic Self-Efficacy." Research Presentation. ISSOTL 19. Oct. 9-12, 2019.
- Bledsoe, R. & Richardson, D. "Too Much Information: Teaching to Minimize Cognitive Overload." Workshop. 2019 Gateway Course Experience Conference. Mar. 17-19, 2019.

Numerous workshops on topics including Course Design, Assignment Design, Assessment, Active Learning, and Documenting Effective Teaching Practices.



29 August 2022

Dear Committee Members,

I enthusiastically support Dr. Robert Bledsoe's application for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Award. He is a leader in SoTL on campus and in Georgia. He has been a Governor's Teaching Fellow, project director for a Complete College Georgia Innovation Grant, administrative leader for the Humanities Program and the Office of Faculty Development and Teaching Excellence, and an author or co-author of nine SoTL articles, an edited collection, and more than 20 scholarly presentations.

Dr. Bledsoe is a producer of scholarship about teaching. Teachers from a variety of disciplines read and apply his research to their own teaching. His research is generalizable and transferable, a requirement of SoTL scholarship. Instructors can rely on Dr. Bledsoe's sound SoTL methodology and trust the data collected in his studies. Increasingly, instructors rely on evidence-based teaching practices to improve student success, and Dr. Bledsoe's contributions to SoTL are substantive and influential. At Augusta University, Dr. Bledsoe was one of the first faculty to incorporate the role-playing game *Reacting to the Past* into his courses. Not only did he encourage other colleagues to adopt *Reacting to the Past* as an active learning exercise, but he also presented and published on the topic. SoTL scholars and experts produce the scholarship on teaching, influence others to employ best practices in the classroom, and apply evidenced-based approaches to their own teaching.

Dr. Bledsoe is an excellent teacher, who singlehandedly teaches the German minor at Augusta University. Each semester, Dr. Bledsoe teaches GRMN 1001, 1002, 2001, 2002, and an upper-level course (as needed). To grow the minor, Dr. Bledsoe has developed an online section of GRMN 1001 to make the language courses more accessible for students. In his in-person and online courses, Dr. Bledsoe foregrounds active learning and creates an environment that facilitates a growth mindset; his pedagogy in the German classroom aligns with the scholarship he produces. Students are successful in Dr. Bledsoe's courses.

Dr. Bledsoe is a SoTL leader and mentor. He has assisted English and World Languages faculty in our department in developing their own research agenda. I include myself amongst the faculty Dr. Bledsoe has mentored. As a part of the leadership in the former Office of Faculty Development and Teaching Excellence, Dr. Bledsoe was instrumental in providing resources and

Department of English and World Languages

opportunities for SoTL training. After participating in those workshops, I was accepted to the USG SOTL Fellows Program; I credit Dr. Bledsoe's mentorship and encouragement for my success in that program. Dr. Bledsoe's reach in SoTL extends beyond his personal accomplishments.

Please consider Dr. Bledsoe for this recognition. He is an exemplar of SoTL scholarship, and his record of publication and student success serve as evidence of his excellence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Seretha D. Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

Dr. Seretha D. Williams, Chair and Professor
seretha.williams@augusta.edu

30 August 2022

Dear Committee Members,

Dr. Robert Bledsoe is truly a scholar of teaching and learning as evidenced by his teaching engagement and his record of research on teaching and learning. His scholarly productivity is particularly notable because his typical contract calls for 80% of his effort to be devoted to teaching, with only 10% to research. On the research team, Dr. Bledsoe is the creative thinker; I am the methodology and data analysis consultant. Our collaboration thrives on his teaching experience, perspective from the Humanities, and community connections.

Dr. Bledsoe's interest in effective teaching and active learning has inspired his ongoing programs of SoTL research, which have addressed several themes and employed multiple methods. I would like to focus on the impact of his work and his reputation among SoTL scholars. Dr. Bledsoe's SoTL research programs developed from his teaching "heart," and he is recognized as a leader and scholar in the field.

His work has local impact.

- Dr. Bledsoe brought Reacting to the Past (RTTP) pedagogy to our university when he began using "Art in Paris, 1888-89" in Humanities classes. RTTP games have since been used by at least seven AU colleagues; AU is now seen as a hub for this active learning pedagogy; and Dr. Bledsoe's engagement with leaders in the broader Reacting community led to an invitation to contribute a chapter in an edited volume on RTTP pedagogy (Bledsoe, Maynard, & Richardson, 2018).
- Dr. Bledsoe is so committed to active learning and to teaching that he volunteered to co-teach my History and Systems of Psychology class so that we could try out an RTTP game in development. That collaboration led us down the unexpected path of writing a scholarly reflective narrative (Richardson, Bledsoe, & Manning, in press). As important, that scholarly effort has had a very direct impact on students as we apply what we learned about students' experiences with RTTP to an ongoing redesign of the game and the course. Additionally, Dr. Bledsoe has been in communication with the national RTTP game designer about the possibility of our developing that game for distribution.

His work has impact on student development.

- Dr. Bledsoe doesn't just do SoTL, he also trains the next generation of SoTL scholars. Most of his publications and presentations include student co-authors, which means that he has mentored these students as members of the research team. That mentorship includes helping the students become familiar SoTL goals and principles, challenging them as they consider research ideas, guiding their exploration of relevant literature, questioning their interpretation of data, supporting their overall development as SoTL scholars, and serving as a member of a thesis committee.

- Dr. Bledsoe directed an undergraduate student research project that aimed to understand how RTTP might influence student values. The student presented the findings as a panelist in a symposium on which two graduate students from the research team presented other work from the RTTP research program.
- Two of the graduate students members of the research team were inspired to pursue doctoral studies in educational psychology, and one has decided to pursue a career in faculty development.

His work has state, national, and international impact.

- Dr. Bledsoe served on the USG Regents' Teaching Excellence Awards Committee, contributing to the selection of individuals who would be recognized for their teaching excellence.
- He serves as a reviewer for SoTL and educational development conferences and major publication outlets.
- As I noted above, AU is seen as a hub of RTTP research because Dr. Bledsoe's connection to that community has kept colleagues aware – and even involved with – our research efforts. Colleagues at three different institutions agreed to have their students participate in a project that examines how personality relates to student learning and engagement in RTTP. Because the RTTP work is answering questions that many in the community are asking (e.g., does the role the student plays in the game affect their learning and engagement?), he has been encouraged to make publications and preprints available on the RTTP website and in the affiliated international Facebook community.
- Presentations based on the first paper in the research program on defining great teaching (Bledsoe & Richardson, 2016) led faculty development colleagues at other institutions in the University System of Georgia to adopt similar awards, which then led to a conference symposium at which each institution described its variation on the award.
- Partly in response to the focus of the university system on academic mindset, we set out a program of research designed to examine the relationship of faculty mindset to teaching practices. The first paper in this series (Richardson, Bledsoe, & Cortez, 2020) appeared in *Cell Biology Education – Life Sciences Education*. According to ResearchGate, this article has already been cited by six other publications, perhaps because of Dr. Bledsoe's participation in a Live Twitter event about the research.
- Evidence of Dr. Bledsoe's recognition as a scholar of teaching and learning comes from an incident that I suspect he is too humble to mention. The workshop on faculty mindset that we presented at a USG Teaching and Learning conference received a public shout-out from the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs who attended and participated in the

workshop – and his recognition was followed by applause from other attendees who had also attended the workshop.

Dr. Bledsoe *is* a scholar of teaching and learning. There is no end in sight for his contributions to SoTL. The research on RTTP and on mindset continues, with papers in press, under review, and in preparation. Students continue to benefit from his knowledge and expertise. He advances his teaching and student learning through investigations of effective teaching and effective teaching practices. He deserves recognition for his commitment, his productivity, and his influence.

Sincerely,

Deborah Richardson

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